

STAT



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KERMIT ROOSEVELT

... in grandfather's footsteps

TR's Safari Duplicated By Grandson

Life on an East African safari is easier than it was a half-century ago, but bagging a bongo still is arduous.

Theodore Roosevelt virtually left his successor's inauguration in search of bongo in Kenya, and allegedly was the first white hunter to shoot one.

His grandson Kermit Roosevelt, has just returned to his home and job as vice president in charge of governmental relations for Gulf Oil in Washington, after retracing much of TR's path through East Africa.

What's a bongo?

"It's a rare, swift antelope that's very hard to get," Kermit said. "My son Jonathan, who stayed on, determined to bag one, finally cabled 'No bongo'."

Like Grandfather's

Roosevelt's modern-day safari, patterned after his grandfather's year-long hunt of 1909, lasted only a month, thanks largely to modern transportation.

At the Nairobi home of Sir Alfred Pease, where TR once stayed, the party encountered Philip Percival, still an active hunter. Two days before his 76th birthday he had shot a lion and was quite happy about it.

Grandson Kermit shot a cape buffalo, considered one of the five most dangerous creatures to bag. Kermit Jr., 22-year-old Harvard graduate, is bringing back a leopard and Jonathan, 20, has some fine wart hogs, among other things. Many of the animal skins culled by the Roosevelts will be displayed at the Smithsonian here when they arrive.

Plane Survey Made

Though most of the 1960 jaunt was done on foot and in a "land rover" (a British jeep), Roosevelt flew over Kenya in a light plane to survey land erosion and conservation of wild life, of great concern to him as well as his grandfather.

The party of 25 was not living like the TR assemblage of 500 men, each toting 60 pounds.

"Safaris are highly unionized now," Roosevelt commented "and food is easier to procure."

The most thrilling face-to-face meeting was with a rhinoceros, which approached Jonathan and two others in "fairly vigorous, aggressive fashion." He was turned away with much shouting, however, and there was no need to fire TR's Winchester .405 rifle.